Florida House of Representatives
Representative Mary Brandenburg
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Rep. Mary Brandenburg (D-Lake Worth) and Alonzo Mourning of the Miami Heat Fight for Floridians with Kidney Disease

TALLAHASSEE — Roughly 11,000 Floridians under the age of 65 need kidney dialysis to stay alive. Because they have limited insurance options, kidney disease can easily bankrupt a family.

House Bill 675, which is co-sponsored by Representative Mary Brandenburg (D-Lake Worth) and supported by former NBA/Miami Heat star Alonzo Mourning, aims to alleviate the financial burdens of these Floridians.

 "Zo" Mourning joined the Miami Heat in 1995 and was named a NBA All-Star seven times and the Defensive Player of the Year twice. He played on the US Olympic basketball team in 2000. He was diagnosed in 2000 with a degenerative kidney disease, underwent a kidney transplant, and then returned to play with the Heat, where he continued as a star performer.

Today, Mr. Mourning met with legislators in the State Capitol, where he advocated for passage of HB 675.

House Bill 675 will make Medicare supplemental insurance, so-called Medigap insurance, available to Floridians under 65 with End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) requiring dialysis or a kidney transplant.

Under Federal law, Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and over may buy Medicare supplemental insurance, which pays for some of the health care costs not covered by Medicare, including copayments, coinsurance and deductibles. House Bill 675 extends the right to purchase Medicare supplemental insurance to Florida Medicare beneficiaries under the age of 65 with ESRD. There will be no fiscal impact on state or local governments.

"Alonzo Mourning is playing his most important role---bringing attention to a serious problem," said Representative Brandenburg. "He really is a star."

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